



**Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan**

# **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan**

**JUNE 2019**



## I. Project Introduction and Background

This Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan (Plan) will guide stakeholder and public involvement during Phase 2 of the development of a potential Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The HCP would move forward should ODF and the Board of Forestry decide to apply to the federal government for an incidental take permit (ITP) as a means of securing Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance for forest management activities. This decision would occur after the stakeholder and public engagement work outlined in this Plan. The Plan describes objectives and activities that the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the consultant team will implement in order to ensure that interested parties have opportunities to provide meaningful input to the process. Should ODF and the Board advance a permit application, additional stakeholder and public engagement would occur as part of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) analysis and ESA consultation process in Phase 3, anticipated in summer 2020.

### Project Overview

ODF is considering a potential HCP and associated ITP for state forestlands west of the Cascade Range. HCPs can serve as a holistic way to comply with the Endangered Species Act. ODF is evaluating what an HCP and an associated ITP would mean for state forests and covered species under a potential HCP. The scope of this effort includes Board of Forestry lands west of the Cascades, and also includes Common School Fund lands owned by the Department of State Lands and managed by ODF, excluding the Elliott State Forest.

ODF is advancing this effort as an Oregon Consensus project. ODF staff, Oregon Consensus, Kearns & West, and technical contractor ICF form a Project Team. Kearns & West leads facilitation of committees and stakeholder and public outreach, and Oregon Consensus is engaged in stakeholder coordination. ICF leads the technical and HCP development work.

The overall HCP process has three phases:

- Phase 1: HCP Initiation/Scoping (Timeline: November 2017 – November 2018)
- Phase 2: Strategy Development (Timeline: November 2018 – November 2020)
- Phase 3: NEPA Analysis and Consultation (Timeline: July 2020 – November 2021)

### Project Purpose

The purpose of the Western Oregon State Forests HCP process is to explore potential options for reaching mutually agreeable conservation, forest management and financial outcomes through incidental take permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries).

This process is currently in Phase 2: Strategy Development. The goal of Phase 2 is to develop and evaluate a draft HCP. This phase is expected to conclude with a first administrative draft of an HCP that would be presented to the Board of Forestry in July 2020. This will provide the Board with the information needed to determine if it is in the best interests of the state to apply for an ITP and continue with Phase 3: NEPA analysis.

## II. Public and Stakeholder Engagement Overview

### Summary of Stakeholder Input on Process

In early 2019, Oregon Consensus and Kearns & West conducted interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders to better understand their perspectives on the Western Oregon State Forests HCP and associated ITP and to help inform a public and stakeholder engagement process. Input from these interviews was used to help develop the communications and stakeholder engagement goals, and to shape the overall public and stakeholder engagement process.

Key input from those interviews included:

- Hope for an HCP outcome that balances conservation and economic benefits, including achievement of measurable and durable conservation goals, revenue-related commitments to counties, and timber harvest while avoiding adverse impacts to adjacent private lands.
- Desire for use of best science and a credible science-based approach to forest management practices advanced as part of any HCP.
- Hope for a predictable, defensible, and realistic ESA-compliance tool that is easy to implement and represents a high level of public buy-in.
- Development of an HCP that is flexible and adaptable to climate change, forest fires, and environmental emergencies.
- Hope for a transparent process and productive engagement and dialogue between interested stakeholders, agencies, counties, and tribes.
- Concern about the difficulty of overcoming historic obstacles and hope for a process that helps bridge the many diverse perspectives and interests.

Participants provided specific input on how to shape an effective stakeholder process:

- Structure an engagement process that is open, transparent, educational, and provides a space where people feel heard.
- Provide regular informational updates at key milestones and help stakeholders understand when new information will be available.
- Provide opportunities for diverse interests to hear from one another. Structure meetings to allow for true collaboration and opportunity to understand one another's points of view.
- Host specific meetings on the topic of the HCP, and also attend meetings of already existing groups.

- Engage existing interested parties or leaders in relevant communities of interest and also widen the engagement to include those from broader networks who may normally not engage in order to get broader perspectives.
- Show how stakeholder input will be used throughout the process and indicate whether and how stakeholder input affected decisions.
- Provide a variety of ways for stakeholders to get engaged and receive information: informational updates, public meetings, deeper discussion opportunities, and an opportunity to engage online.

## **Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Goals**

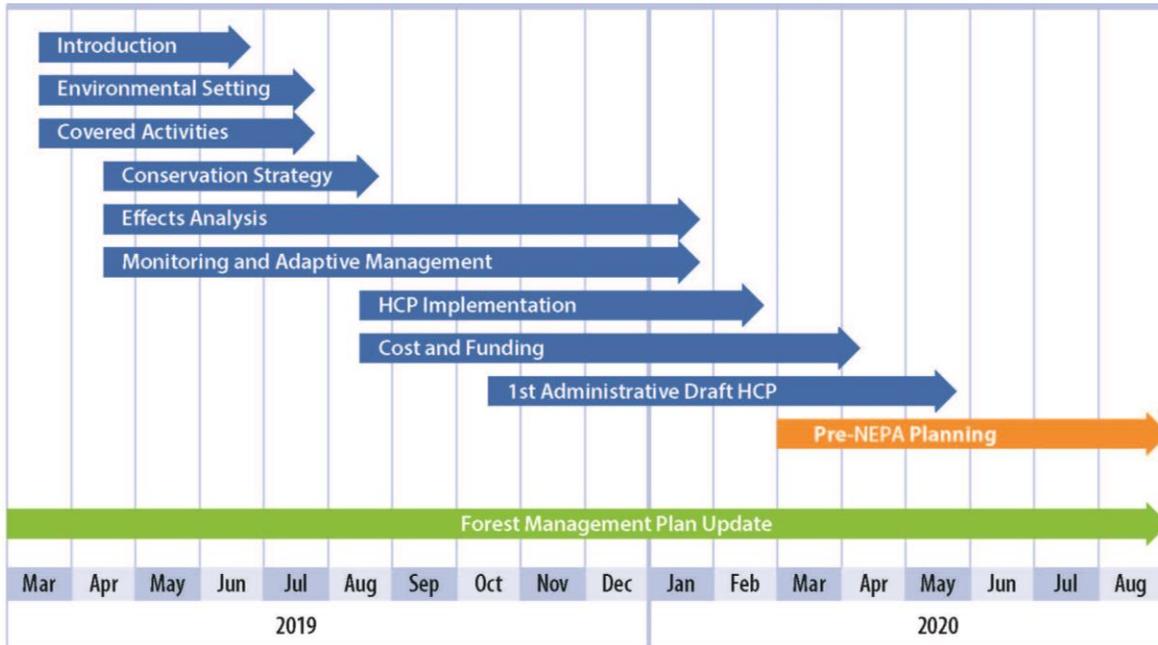
Stakeholder engagement and communication goals are to:

- Provide counties, stakeholders and interested parties with an opportunity to provide feedback at key points throughout the process.
- Engage counties as part of the Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee, and as part of the overall engagement effort.
- Keep interested parties informed at all major milestones through timely updates and information.
- Allow diverse interests to hear and learn from one another's perspectives.
- Provide clear expectations for how stakeholder and public input will be used and integrated into the Western Oregon State Forests HCP product.
- Build a common understanding on Western Oregon State Forests HCP development expected results of HCP implementation.
- Align engagement and outreach opportunities with related processes, such as the State Forest Management Plan (FMP) Revision.
- Keep stakeholders informed to promote relevant comments during the subsequent Western Oregon State Forests HCP NEPA Process.

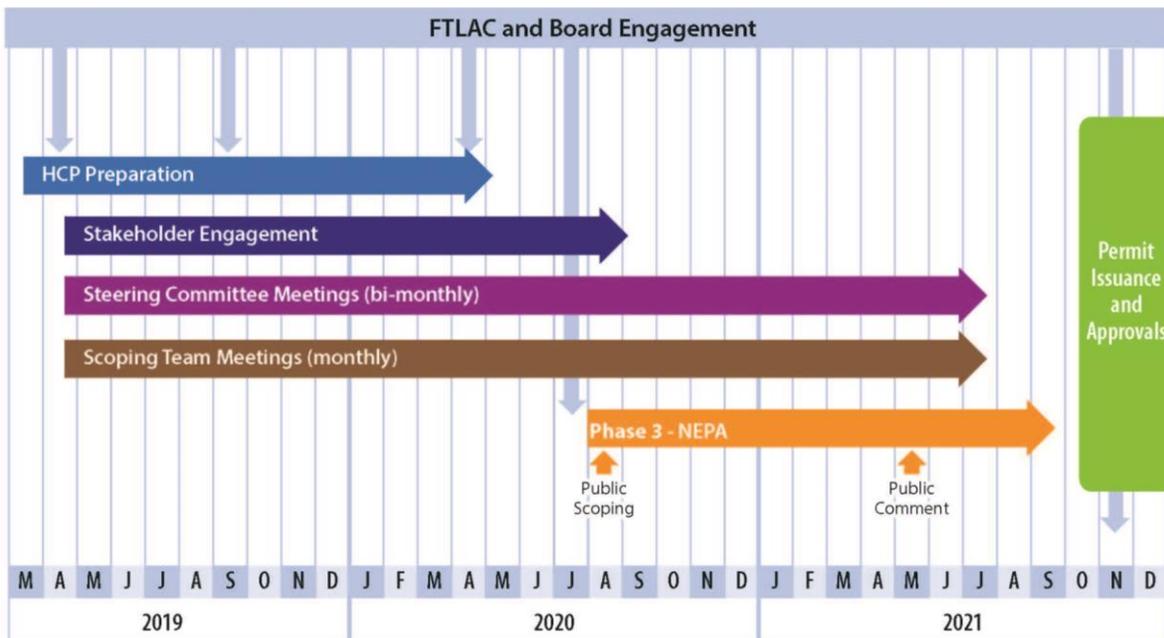
### III. Project Workplan and Timeline

Phase 2 is guided by an overall technical workplan that helps to guide HCP development and keeps the project on track. The workplan is intended to be a guide and may change as needed to accommodate an effective and efficient process.

#### Proposed HCP Development Timeline



#### Proposed HCP Process Timeline



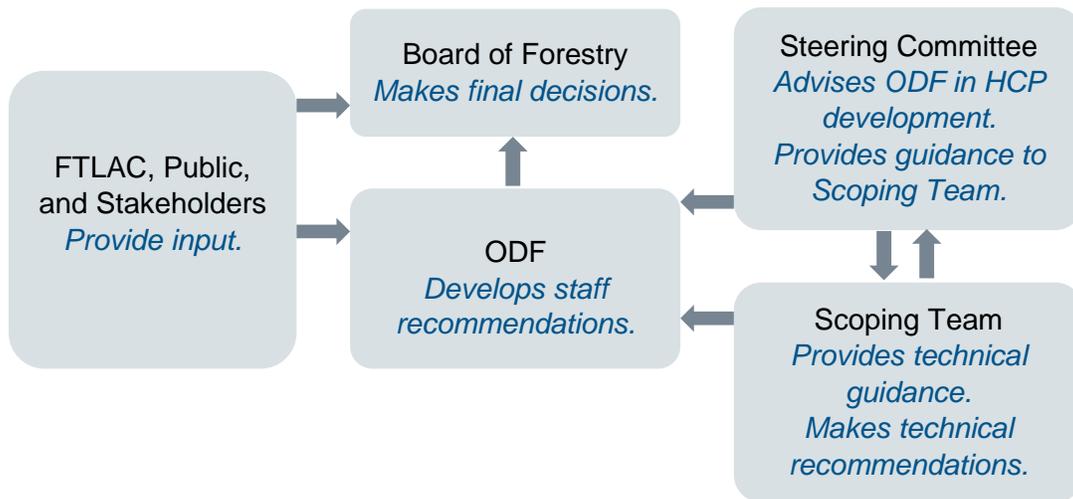
## IV. Audience and Participants

The engagement effort seeks participation of all potentially affected and/or interested individuals, communities, and organizations. To date, the Project Team has identified a number of interests and/or types of stakeholder groups to engage in the process. The process will seek to engage the following types of entities, and will continue to identify others to include in the process:

- Counties (through the Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee (FTLAC))
- Board of Forestry
- Elected officials
- Agency partners
- Tribal representatives
- Timber and forest products industry
- Conservation groups
- Recreational users of the forest
- Civic groups
- Existing ODF advisory groups, including State Forests Advisory Committee (SFAC), Industry Ad-hoc, and Conservation Collaborative
- Business and economic organizations
- Small woodland, private forest landowners, farm and agricultural interests
- General public
- Media

## V. Engagement Framework

The Western Oregon State Forests HCP development process involves a wide range of agencies, partners, committees, and stakeholders. Each plays a unique role in providing input into the project, with varying levels of decision-making authority. The ODF State Forests Division Chief is the convener of the process. Final decision-making authority to apply for ITPs rests in the hands of the Board of Forestry. The Board of Forestry will consider ODF guidance, and county, stakeholder, and public input when making decisions regarding whether to apply for ITPs. A Steering Committee and Scoping Team will provide advice and guidance to ODF's State Forest Chief and to the Project Team. The structure and authority of each key group is described below. The graphic below illustrates the engagement structure for the project.



### Roles of Participants

**Stakeholders and the Public** are engaged throughout the process of HCP development. Public engagement is critical for an effective HCP process. Stakeholders and the public provide input through public meetings and events and are kept up to date via the project website, social media, and email updates. Feedback received from public stakeholders is summarized and provided to the Project Team to help inform HCP development and is funneled up to Board of Forestry for consideration in final decision-making.

**Oregon counties** have a unique role and interest in the HCP effort and timber harvest revenues. The Counties will be engaged in the process through FTLAC meetings and through additional meetings or individual conversations as appropriate. Their input will be considered in developing the HCP and associated ITP.

The **Board of Forestry** receives updates throughout the process at certain Board of Forestry meetings and engagement with ODF staff. The Board will consider the HCP when deciding whether or not ODF will pursue an incidental take permit application.

The **ODF State Forests Division Chief** is the convener of the process. The Division Chief requested that state and federal representatives participate on a Steering Committee and

Scoping Team to provide technical and policy advice, and she will consider this advice when making recommendations to the Board the Forestry regarding the HCP and an associated ITP. **ODF** is also responsible for advancing the agency’s legal requirements, management direction, and overall state forest responsibilities in developing a potential HCP, including direct staff support in HCP development by providing technical input and data.

The **Steering Committee** provides overall guidance for the HCP process and provides direction and support to the Scoping Team. It is comprised of decision makers from state and federal regulatory agencies including: ODF, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), USFWS, and NOAA Fisheries. Oregon State University (OSU) is also a member of the Steering Committee to lend their scientific expertise, and to identify potential partnership opportunities in the monitoring and adaptive management pieces of the HCP. Steering Committee members are briefed on the content of HCP chapters and provide feedback and direction to the Scoping Team regarding potential policy-level impacts.

The **Scoping Team** provides technical expertise and develops technical recommendations for the Steering Committee to consider when advising the ODF State Forests Division Chief in the development of a potential HCP and an associated ITP. The Scoping Team is comprised of terrestrial and aquatic biologists and technical specialists from state and federal agencies. The Scoping Team is involved in the development of technical work products to be included in the chapters of the Draft HCP.

**Western Oregon State Forests HCP Steering Committee and Scoping Team Membership**

**Steering Committee Members**

- ODF State Forests Division Chief
- ODFW Wildlife Division Administrator
- DEQ Deputy Director
- DSL Deputy Director for Operations
- NOAA Fisheries Oregon & Washington Coastal Office, Assistant Regional Administrator
- USFWS Oregon State Supervisor
- OSU Associate Dean College of Agricultural Sciences and Professor of Wildlife

**Scoping Team Members**

- ODF Deputy Division Chief
- ODF State Forests HCP Coordinator
- ODF Riparian and Aquatic Specialist
- ODF Wildlife Biologist
- ODFW Fisheries Biologist
- ODFW Forest Practices Coordinator
- DSL Forester
- DEQ TMDL Manager
- NOAA Fisheries Biologist
- NOAA Fisheries Oregon Coast Branch Chief
- USFWS Fish and Wildlife Biologist

*\* Technical Reviewer: OSU PhD Silviculturist*

A **Project Team** composed of ODF and its technical and process consultants is responsible for the day-to-day development of the HCP and coordinating the work of the various committees and groups. The Project Team is composed of ODF, ICF, Oregon Consensus and Kearns & West.

The following are the Project Team member roles in county, stakeholder and public engagement:

- **ODF** – ODF will oversee county, public and stakeholder engagement. ODF is primarily responsible for informational outreach such as creating and distribute news releases, website updates, and stakeholder emails and holding meetings and briefings with existing committees and groups.
- **Oregon Consensus and Kearns & West** – Oregon Consensus and Kearns & West provide process and stakeholder engagement support. Kearns & West is a national collaborative solutions and strategic communications firm, and Oregon Consensus is a statewide neutral forum for collaborative public policymaking. Kearns & West will facilitate and provide process support for the Steering Committee and Scoping Team and will coordinate and facilitate HCP stakeholder and public engagement meetings and activities. Oregon Consensus will participate in Steering Committee meetings and HCP stakeholder and public engagement meetings and provide a stakeholder liaison role between meetings.
- **ICF** – ICF is the prime technical consultant and serves as the consultant technical project manager for HCP development. ICF is an internationally renowned technical firm that specializes in HCP development. The firm provides technical support throughout the HCP process including project management, wildlife ecology, fisheries and aquatic ecology, and forest ecology and economics.

ICF leads the overall work plan, develops content closely with ODF for inclusion in HCP chapters, and leads all technical tasks. ICF will make presentations to groups and committees involved in the HCP as well as at public and stakeholder meetings.

## VI. Public and Stakeholder Engagement Approach and Activities

### A. Stakeholder Engagement Approach

Ongoing involvement with the public and stakeholders will occur throughout HCP development, and in particular to present and seek feedback at key milestones. The Project Team will hold specific meetings with counties, stakeholders and the public to present and gather feedback on the HCP and associated ITP and will also use existing forums and communication tools to keep stakeholders engaged.

The stakeholder engagement process is expected to include:

1. **Meetings Open to the Public** – The public will be invited to meetings approximately quarterly. The meetings will include updates on key milestones, opportunities for Q&A and discussion on relevant topics, as well as dialogue with Western Oregon State Forests HCP Steering Committee, Scoping Team, and Project Team members. When possible, the meetings will be available through an online platform to provide greater access to those that cannot attend in person.
2. **Targeted Stakeholder Engagement Meetings and Activities** – In the months following each public meeting, the Project Team will engage stakeholders in follow-up conversations and discussions to delve more deeply into specific issues. Topics will depend on stakeholder interest and meetings will be tailored to best meet the needs of stakeholders and to promote effective gathering of input. Targeted stakeholder engagement may include focus groups, one-on-one conversations, small group discussion groups, workshops, or other forms of engagement.
3. **Meetings of Existing Venues** – ODF will provide updates on the HCP and associated ITP and opportunities for discussion through existing forums such as FTLAC meetings, stakeholder roundtable meetings, Board of Forestry meetings, and others, including meetings with counties and tribes. Many of these forums provide an opportunity for public input and act as an additional way for interested parties to stay engaged.
4. **Communications and Public Information** – The Project Team will provide regular informational updates through email, ODF website, and other tools.

### B. Public and Stakeholder Engagement Meetings and Activities

#### 1. Western Oregon State Forests HCP Public and Stakeholder Meetings

The table below describes anticipated outreach points and milestones or topic for public and stakeholder engagement at each point. This schedule is closely linked to the Phase 2 technical workplan and will shift to accommodate changes to the technical workplan, as needed.

Date	Type of Meeting	Meeting Topics
March 2019	 Meeting open to Public	<b>Public Kick-Off Meeting</b> Introduce and describe the HCP Process.
April 2019	 Board Check-in	<b>Board of Forestry Meeting (preceded by FTLAC and Stakeholder Roundtable meetings)</b>
June and Summer 2019	  Stakeholder Engagement	<b>Meeting for Public and Follow-up Stakeholder Engagement</b> Updates on permit area, permit term, plan area, covered species list, existing conditions, data used, covered activities, and HCP mission, vision and goals. Follow-up with stakeholders for further discussion on existing conditions/data and covered activities and begin to discuss funding and revenue generation.
Fall 2019	 Board Check-in	<b>Board of Forestry Meeting (preceded by FTLAC and Stakeholder Roundtable meetings)</b>
Fall 2019	  Stakeholder Engagement	<b>Conservation Strategy Meeting for Public (Part 1) and Follow-up Stakeholder Engagement</b> Updates on biological goals and objectives, conservation strategy, and effects analysis. Follow-up discussions with stakeholders to inform the development of conservation strategy, as well as discussion of implementation, assurances, and alternatives.
Winter (Dec 2019 – Feb 2020)	  Stakeholder Engagement	<b>Conservation Strategy Meeting for Public (Part 2) and Follow-up Stakeholder Engagement</b> Public meeting to present summary of effects analysis and updates to the conservation strategy. Follow-up discussions with stakeholders to discuss monitoring and adaptive management.
Spring 2020	  Stakeholder Engagement	<b>Meeting for Public and Follow-Up Stakeholder Engagement</b> Public meeting to present and discuss estimated cost of the HCP and funding strategy. Follow-up discussions with stakeholders on estimated cost of the HCP and funding strategy.
April 2020	 Board Check-in	<b>Board of Forestry Meeting (preceded by FTLAC and Stakeholder Roundtable meetings)</b>
Spring/Summer 2020	 Meeting open to Public	<b>Meeting for Public: Present Draft HCP</b> Present 1st Administrative Draft HCP prior to NEPA.
July 2020	 Board Check-in	<b>Board of Forestry Meeting (preceded by FTLAC and Stakeholder Roundtable meetings)</b>

## **2. Meetings of Existing Venues**

Discussion on key topics, information sharing, and updates may take place through these ongoing forums:

- Board of Forestry Meetings
- Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee (FTLAC) Meetings
- ODF Stakeholder Roundtable Meetings
- ODF State Forests Advisory Committee (SFAC) Meetings
- ODF Industry Ad-hoc Meetings
- ODF Conservation Collaborative Meetings
- Meetings with Counties
- Meetings with Tribes
- Other groups, as identified

## **3. Communications and Public Information**

Informational updates will be provided on a regular basis through email, ODF website, and other tools, as described in Section VIII: Public Information and Communications.

## VII. Public Information and Communications

Various tools will be used to keep stakeholders and the public informed and up to date on major developments of the HCP process and associated ITP:

1. **Email Updates:** ODF will distribute regular email announcements to interested parties included in the stakeholder database. Emails may include project updates at key milestones, announcement of the availability of work products, invitations to public and stakeholder meetings, and other relevant information. These emails will be a key tool to keep interested parties informed throughout the process. It is anticipated that informational emails will be sent out approximately bi-monthly. Additionally, meeting announcements will be sent out in advance of public meetings and key events.
2. **Project Website:** ODF will use a page on its existing website to provide information on the HCP (<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/AboutODF/Pages/HCP-initiative.aspx>). The page will include relevant information, upcoming meeting dates and events, meeting summaries, and final work products. The website will also include a link to sign up for email updates.
3. **Social Media:** ODF will use its existing social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter to announce key HCP milestones and to promote public meetings.
4. **Stakeholder database:** ODF will develop a database that includes interested parties, stakeholders, and public meeting attendees. The database will be updated after public meetings and events and will track those individuals and groups who express interest in the project. The database will be used for notification of public meetings and project news.
5. **News Releases:** ODF will use FlashAlert to distribute project information to areas west of the Cascades.
6. **Oregon Transparency Website:** ODF will post public meeting notices on the State Transparency Website.
7. **ODF News:** Public notices will be posted to the ODF news site (<http://oregonforestry.wpengine.com/>).
8. **Public and stakeholder involvement input summaries:** The Project Team will develop a written summary after each stakeholder and public meeting to capture input and key outcomes. The summaries will be a main method to understand and synthesize public input for consideration in the HCP. These documents will be housed on the project website.
9. **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):** ODF will develop an FAQ document and update it regularly with questions asked by the public. The document will be posted on the project website and will be updated approximately quarterly.